

# BRFSS Brief

Number 1304

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual statewide telephone survey of adults developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the New York State Department of Health. The BRFSS is designed to provide information on behaviors, risk factors, and utilization of preventive services related to the leading causes of chronic and infectious diseases, disability, injury, and death among the noninstitutionalized, civilian population aged 18 years and older.

## Overweight and Obesity

New York State Adults, 2011

### Introduction and Key Findings

Obesity and overweight are currently the second leading cause of preventable death in the United States (US) and may soon overtake tobacco as the leading preventable cause of death.<sup>1</sup> By the year 2050, obesity is predicted to shorten life expectancy in the US by 2-5 years.<sup>2</sup> Obesity is a significant risk factor for many chronic diseases and conditions including type 2 diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke, heart disease, certain types of cancer, and osteoarthritis.<sup>3-6</sup> Increasingly, these conditions are being seen in children and adolescents.<sup>7,8</sup>

Creating community environments that promote and support healthy food and beverage choices and physical activity is a major goal in the effort to prevent and reduce the burden of chronic disease and a focus of the New York State Department of Health Prevention Agenda 2013-2017. Efforts to maintain healthy weight should start early in childhood and continue throughout adulthood.

### KEY FINDINGS

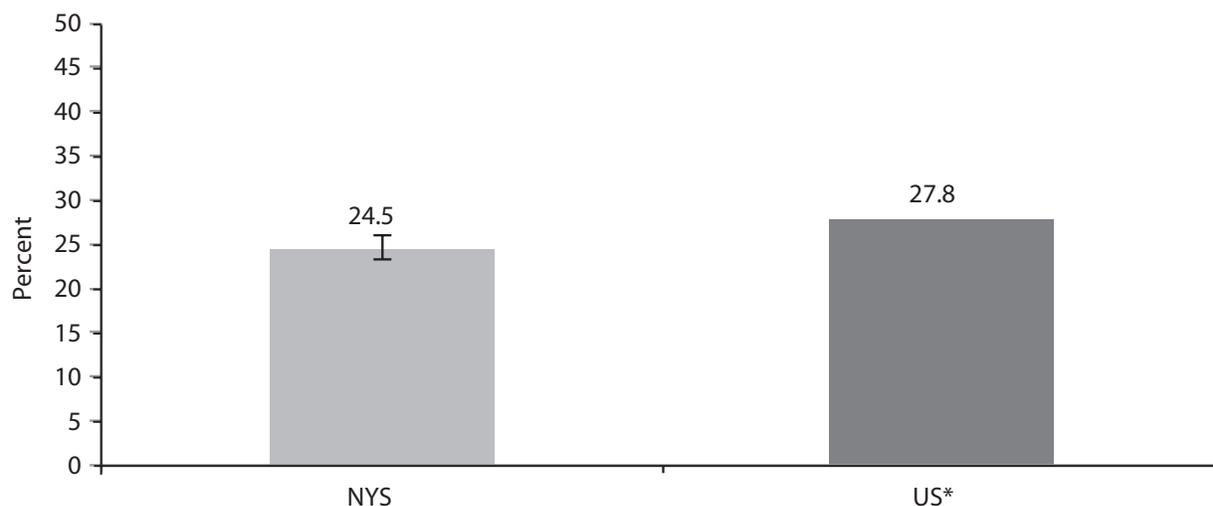
Nearly one-quarter (24.5%) of adults in New York State are obese and another 36% are overweight, an estimated 8.5 million residents. The rate of obesity is higher among adults who are non-Hispanic Black (32.5%), earn an annual household income less than \$25,000 (26.8%), have less than a college education (27.1%), or are currently living with a disability (34.9%).

### BRFSS Questions

1. About how much do you weigh without shoes?
2. About how tall are you without shoes?

Weight and height responses were used to determine body mass index (BMI), calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. Respondents were classified as overweight if their BMI was equal to or greater than 25.0, but less than 30.0. They were classified as obese if their BMI was 30.0 or greater.

**Figure 1. Obesity among US and New York State adults, BRFSS 2011**



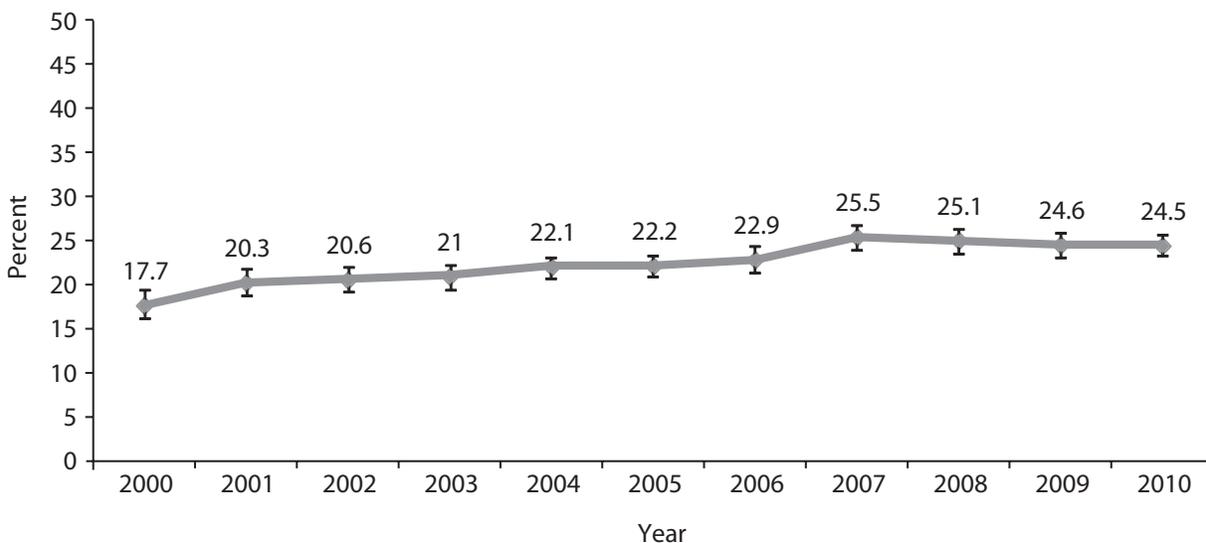
\* Median percent; includes data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

### Changes to BRFSS Methodology

Beginning in 2011, BRFSS data includes data from interviews completed by people with cell phones in addition to interviews completed by people with landlines. The data also reflect changes in how the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) weight the data. Weighting ensures that the data collected are as representative of New York's population as possible. The new method of weighting enables more demographic information about the respondents to be incorporated into the weighting. While these two changes improve the accuracy of the BRFSS, they may result in prevalence estimates that are significantly different from those previously calculated. **Because of the differences in data collection, it is not appropriate to compare 2011 data to prior years and the BRFSS 2011 prevalence data should be considered a baseline year for data analysis.**

**Figure 2. Prevalence of obesity among New York State adults, by BRFSS survey year**



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

## Overweight and obesity<sup>a</sup> among New York State adults, 2011 BRFSS

	Neither overweight nor obese		Overweight <sup>b</sup>		Obese <sup>c</sup>	
	% <sup>d</sup>	95% CI <sup>d</sup>	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
<b>New York State (NYS)</b> [n=7,222]	<b>39.7</b>	<b>38.1-41.3</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>34.3-37.4</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>23.2-25.9</b>
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	33.4	31.1-35.9	41.3	38.9-43.7	25.3	23.3-27.4
Female	45.9	43.9-48.0	30.4	28.5-32.3	23.7	22.1-25.5
<b>Age (years)</b>						
18-24	62.5	55.7-68.8	28.1	22.2-34.8	9.5	6.5-13.6
25-34	46.4	42.3-50.9	32.7	28.9-36.7	20.9	17.6-24.6
35-44	38.1	34.4-41.9	36.0	32.2-39.9	26.0	22.7-29.5
45-54	31.1	28.0-34.3	38.9	35.6-42.4	30.0	26.9-33.2
55-64	30.0	27.1-33.0	38.9	35.6-42.2	31.2	28.2-34.3
65+	36.1	33.6-38.7	38.0	35.4-40.7	25.9	23.4-28.5
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
White non-Hispanic	40.8	38.8-42.7	35.6	33.8-37.5	23.6	22.1-25.3
Black non-Hispanic	31.9	27.7-36.5	35.6	31.3-40.1	32.5	28.6-36.6
Hispanic	34.7	30.5-39.2	38.9	34.7-43.3	26.3	22.7-30.3
Other non-Hispanic	52.1	46.0-58.1	31.6	26.1-37.7	16.3	12.3-21.3
<b>Income</b>						
<\$25,000	39.4	36.3-42.7	33.8	30.8-36.8	26.8	24.3-29.6
\$25,000-\$34,999	39.4	34.5-44.4	34.6	30.0-39.5	26.1	21.9-30.6
\$35,000-\$49,999	38.4	34.1-43.0	33.1	29.1-37.3	28.5	24.5-32.9
\$50,000-\$74,999	35.0	31.0-39.3	38.2	34.0-42.6	26.8	23.1-30.8
\$75,000 and greater	42.8	39.8-45.8	37.1	34.2-40.0	20.2	18.0-22.5
Missing <sup>e</sup>	39.6	35.1-44.2	38.4	33.7-43.2	22.1	18.5-26.1
<b>Educational attainment</b>						
Less than high school (HS)	33.1	28.4-38.1	39.4	34.7-44.3	27.5	23.5-31.9
High school or GED	37.7	34.6-40.9	35.5	32.5-38.6	26.9	24.3-29.6
Some post-HS	36.1	33.0-39.3	36.8	33.7-40.1	27.1	24.4-29.9
College graduate	48.2	45.9-50.5	33.6	31.5-35.7	18.2	16.6-20.0
<b>Disability<sup>f</sup></b>						
Yes	30.9	28.1-33.8	34.2	31.4-37.2	34.9	32.1-37.8
No	42.2	40.3-44.2	36.7	34.8-38.6	21.1	19.6-22.7
<b>Region</b>						
New York City (NYC)	43.5	41.3-45.8	34.3	32.2-36.5	22.1	20.4-24.0
NYS exclusive of NYC	36.9	34.7-39.1	36.9	34.8-39.1	26.2	24.4-28.2

<sup>a</sup> Based on categories of body mass index (BMI), calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters.

<sup>b</sup> Overweight, 25.0<BMI<30.0

<sup>c</sup> Obese, BMI>30.0

<sup>d</sup> % = weighted percentage; CI = confidence interval.

<sup>e</sup> "Missing" category included because more than 10% of the sample did not report income.

<sup>f</sup> All respondents who report activity limitations due to physical, mental, or emotional problems OR have health problems that require the use of special equipment.

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## Program Contributions

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